

MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION/HISTORY/OVERVIEW

The Harford County Master Plan, combined with the Land Use Element Plan, provides direction for addressing future growth, revitalization, the provision of adequate public facilities, economic development and the preservation and protection of natural resources, agricultural lands and historic resources. It also incorporates the “Visions” of the 1992 Maryland Planning Act and Smart Growth initiatives as part of its policy to maintain the high quality of life enjoyed by County residents.

Harford County has prepared several comprehensive plans dealing with land use and population growth. One of the first plans was prepared by the consulting firm of Harland, Bartholomew and Associates for the Harford County Planning and Zoning Commission in 1969. This Plan reviewed issues and provided recommendations on land use, transportation, public schools, parks and open space, public buildings and facilities, and utilities and public services. Growth opportunities, as identified in the "General Land Use Plan" section, were provided along the MD Route 152 and 24 corridors, in an area from the Town of Bel Air to the City of Aberdeen, and along the MD Route 155 corridor between Churchville and the City of Havre de Grace. Population was projected to be 204,500 by the year 1985.

The County's second comprehensive plan was prepared in 1977, and marked the beginning of comprehensive planning under the new charter form of government. Adopted in 1972, the County Charter required the development of Master Plans. These plans were "to guide public and private actions affecting a wide range of activities in Harford County." The 1977 Plan, known as "The Harford County Master Plan," dealt generally with growth trends and development. The amount of land available for development in this Plan was scaled back from the 1969 Plan, reflecting the availability and capacity of public facilities. The Development Envelope concept, which defined a geographic area for planned development, was introduced in this Plan. This concept allowed the County to begin staging and directing more intense growth into a specific area, namely the corridors defined by I-95/U.S. Route 40 and the MD Route 24 corridor north to Bel Air. The County's population was expected to reach 200,000 by the year 1996. A Citizens' Review Committee approach encouraged public participation in the 1977 effort. Citizen involvement in developing this Plan was focused on local planning areas, and citizens groups were encouraged to provide input on important issues.

The 1988 Harford County Land Use Element Plan reinforced the Development Envelope concept by maintaining essentially the same boundary as shown in the 1977 Plan, and as modified in the 1982 Comprehensive Zoning Review. The outcome of this process determined that the County contained sufficient land zoned for development to accommodate projected growth.

The 1988 Plan introduced an alternative approach to a single Master Plan by utilizing the concept of individual element plans. Thus, the 1988 Land Use Element Plan became the "core plan" upon which individual element plans were developed. The Land Use Element Plan was supported by the development of a series of six element plans which included the Water and Sewer Master Plan, the Solid Waste Management Plan, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program, the Rural Element Plan, the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, and the Transportation Element Plan. These plans presented the framework for providing public services to sustain the Development Envelope concept

and the level of growth outlined in the 1988 Plan. Additional implementation tools were added, such as the Adequate Public Facilities program to help manage growth more effectively in the Development Envelope.

In 1996, the Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan were combined to strengthen the “core” of the planning process as proposed in 1988. The 1996 Plan maintained the Development Envelope concept concluding that there was sufficient capacity within the Envelope to support projected growth for approximately 18 years. The development of the 1996 Plan was largely based on a community planning process involving 10 Community Planning Councils. These Councils provided information on the uniqueness and similarities of Harford County’s communities. Their common issues, balanced with each community’s individuality, provided guidance for the development of a countywide vision on land use. Additional element plans were added to supplement the 1996 Plan. These included the Natural Resources Plan, the Historic Preservation Plan, the Edgewood Community Plan, and the Joppa/Joppatowne Community Plan.

The 2004 Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan continue the format established in 1988 and carried forward in 1996. The direction of the Plan is based on community identification of issues that influence the quality of life in Harford County, combined with implementation of State programs.

The Master Plan begins by defining the relationship between the Land Use Element Plan and the other element plans. A Community Facilities element along with an updated Rural element have been added to the 2004 Land Use Element Plan. The other element plans will be updated concurrently, to ensure consistency with the initiatives outlined in the Land Use Element Plan. This is a first step in developing a consolidated Comprehensive Plan.

The next section details Harford County’s methods for incorporating the “Visions” of the Maryland Planning Act and Smart Growth Initiatives. This section identifies the specific components of the eight “Visions,” as well as the programs included under the Smart Growth legislation. It summarizes the actions taken by the County to implement these State initiatives, including designation of Priority Funding Areas and implementation of a Rural Legacy Program. It also highlights programs and planning efforts that Maryland counties are required to address in their growth management and resource protection plans and programs. Building on these State programs, Harford County has developed a series of Guiding Principles. These Guiding Principles form the foundation for the Land Use Element Plan, and in effect provide Harford County’s vision for growth management and resource protection.

The final component of the Master Plan addresses interjurisdictional coordination. Because the Maryland Planning Act and the Smart Growth legislation both call for directing future growth toward existing population centers, coordination between the County and the municipalities is essential. This section will identify the steps that have been taken to ensure a consistent approach to planning in Harford County, while establishing guidelines for developing a regional approach to growth management and resource conservation.

Implementation of the 2004 Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan will be accomplished through a series of key actions. A comprehensive review and revision of all element plans will be undertaken so recommendations are consistent with the 2004 Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan. The

Zoning Code will be comprehensively reviewed and revised to properly implement the goals and objectives of the 2004 Master Plan, and help ensure that comprehensive zoning is completed in a manner consistent with the policies set forth in this document. Interaction with other agencies will continue so their programs and capital expenditures are implemented in a manner consistent with the policies and needs identified in this Plan. In order to monitor the progress of the Plan's implementation, the Department of Planning and Zoning will prepare a report every year identifying accomplishments, issues needing resolution, and recommendations for updating the Plan.

ELEMENT PLANS

The Harford County Charter requires the Department of Planning and Zoning to "prepare and propose Master Plans." This directive further requires the inclusion of a series of elements, or components, in the Master Plan including a Land Use Element Plan and other supporting elements which "further advance the purposes" of the Master Plan. In addition, the Charter requires that each element of the Master Plan "describe how it relates to the other elements" in achieving the overall goals of the Master Plan.

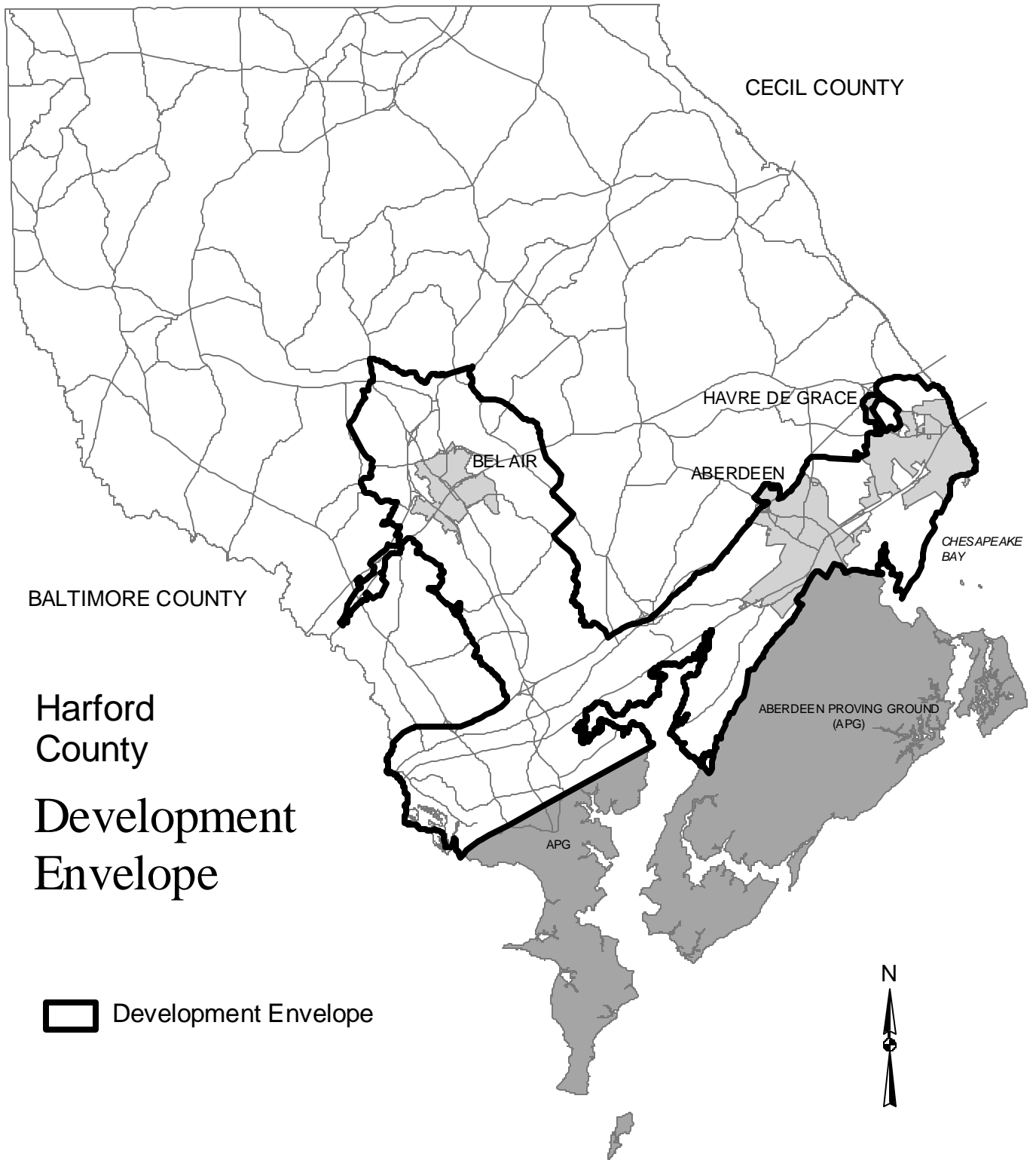
This Land Use Element Plan is viewed as the core of the Master Plan since it prescribes the basic strategies that will guide the County in directing the locations and functional form of residential, commercial, and industrial growth. It identifies those areas suitable for more intensive development. These include areas already served by public water and sewer facilities and, most specifically, the Development Envelope (Figure 1). The Development Envelope is an inverted T-shaped area generally defined as the MD 24/MD 924 corridors north to MD 23, the areas that abut I-95 and US 40, and the U.S. 1 corridor. The other element plans present the framework for providing public services, matched to the level of growth, as outlined in the Land Use Element Plan.

Over the years, Harford County has developed a number of element plans. The Water and Sewer Master Plan, the Solid Waste Management Plan, and the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan are developed by the Department of Public Works and Department of Parks and Recreation, respectively. These plans are developed to fulfill State requirements in addition to those noted in Article 66B. Article 66B establishes the guidelines for comprehensive plans that must be followed by both charter and non-charter counties. To ensure consistency with State requirements, the remaining element plans are prepared by the Department of Planning and Zoning. These plans build on the concepts set forth in the Land Use Element Plan and provide more specific guidance for implementation. The Consolidated Plan, prepared by the Department of Community Services, has also been adopted in accordance with Federal requirements from HUD. The adopted plans that support the Land Use Element Plan include The Water and Sewer Master Plan, the Solid Waste Management Plan, the Rural Element Plan, the Transportation Element Plan, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program, the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, the Natural Resources Element Plan and the Historic Preservation Element Plan. Edgewood and Joppa-Joppatowne have adopted community-level master plans, both of which are considered elements of the Master Plan.

Each of these element plans has a unique purpose and each is reviewed here in very general terms:

The Water and Sewer Master Plan (enacted by Council Bill 93-19, and amended semi-annually) sets the foundation for the timing and planning of public water and sewer facilities in appropriately zoned areas. Providing these services, in a manner consistent with the Land Use Element Plan, it follows and supports the Development Envelope concept.

PENNSYLVANIA



Source: Harford County Planning & Zoning.

Figure 1

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The Solid Waste Management Plan (enacted by Council Bill 94-81) evaluates the County's solid waste management operations and establishes a 10-year management program for these operations.

The Rural Element Plan (enacted by Council Bill 92-95) addresses preservation of the County's rural character and promotion of agriculture as the primary economic enterprise in the rural areas. The strategies included in the Plan are designed to preserve the County's agricultural land base and open space by using alternative preservation techniques. The Plan also addresses methods for protecting the environment and promoting and preserving a sense of community. Key recommendations of the Plan have already been implemented, including the establishment of a County Purchase of Development Rights Program and Conservation Development Standards.

The Transportation Element Plan (enacted by Council Bill 93-80, updated by Council Bill 00-8) explains the relationship between land use and transportation systems. It establishes goals and objectives for planning and implementing an efficient, safe, and multi-modal transportation system for the County; a system that includes roads, public transportation, and ridesharing.

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program (updated by Council Bills 95-54, 95-55, 95-56, 97-7, 00-53 and 01-36) is designed to manage land use within 1,000 feet of tidal waters and tidal wetlands. Its goal is to protect water quality and natural habitat, and to accommodate future growth based on environmentally sensitive areas.

The Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (enacted by Council Bill 94-5, updated by Council Bill 99-50) addresses the County's needs for open space and recreational areas, and considers these areas as part of a larger system of preserved lands. It also explores the relationships between land used for recreation, in the broader context of preservation, and appropriate use of natural resources. This plan fulfills the State's Program Open Space (POS) requirements and thereby qualifies the County for POS funding.

The Natural Resources Element Plan (enacted by Council Bill 98-2) satisfies the requirement of the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992. This Act specifies that local Master Plans address the protection of sensitive areas. The Plan includes methods for protecting environmental resources, including streams and their buffers, steep slopes, floodplains, and the habitats of threatened and endangered species.

The Historic Preservation Element Plan (enacted by Council Bill 98-20, updated by Council Bill 01-29) strengthens the County's historic preservation efforts. It explains how historic structures and archaeological sites can further an awareness of the importance of the County's heritage among the citizens. Documented increases in tourism demonstrate that historical sites have the potential to broaden the County's economic base as well.

Edgewood Community Plan (enacted by Council Bill 00-06) is a comprehensive revitalization strategy to improve physical, social, and economic conditions within the Edgewood community. The Plan strives to guide future growth and sustain the community's character and values.

Joppa-Joppatowne Community Plan (enacted by Council Bill 03-13) is a community-level master plan that serves as a blueprint for the physical development and redevelopment of the community. The Joppa-Joppatowne community represents portions of the County's Development Envelope and low intensity rural areas, and is an example of a diverse group of stakeholders reaching consensus on matters of mutual concern.

The Consolidated Plan (updated in accordance with Federal requirements from HUD for Fiscal Years 2003-2007) outlines how the County will use Federal, State, and local funds to address the housing and community development needs of low to moderate income families in the community. It is designed to be a collaborative process whereby a community establishes a unified vision for community development. It offers Harford County the opportunity to shape the various housing and community development programs into effective, coordinated, neighborhood and community development strategies.

In order to ensure consistency between the Land Use Element Plan and the other element plans, the Department of Planning and Zoning will review and revise all element plans within its purview. This will be done with the goal of establishing a process that will provide for a concurrent review and update of all element plans as part of the next Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan update. Toward this end, a Community Facilities section was added to this plan and the Rural Plan was updated. The other element plans will be updated by the appropriate departments. The Land Preservation and Recreation Plan is scheduled for updating in 2004, as is the Solid Waste Management Plan. The Water and Sewer Master Plan is updated every six months.

MARYLAND PLANNING ACT and SMART GROWTH INITIATIVES

The 1992 Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act combined with the State's Smart Growth Initiatives have changed the way citizens of the State of Maryland address land use planning. These programs focus planning efforts toward growth management and resource protection. They also place new responsibilities on the State and local jurisdictions to implement comprehensive land use plans in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Planning Act of 1992 established seven "Visions", which were first addressed by Harford County in the 1996 Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan. The State of Maryland has since added an eighth "Vision" dealing with adequate public facilities and infrastructure. These "Visions", and how the County continues to address them, is presented below.

To further implement the Planning Act, the 1997 Maryland General Assembly adopted several programs that comprise the State's Smart Growth initiative. This initiative includes land use, neighborhood revitalization, and preservation policies geared to support locally designated growth areas while also protecting rural areas. Smart Growth involves using land more efficiently through compact development and infill. It supports locating residential, commercial, and civic facilities within walking distance of each other. It encourages providing housing choices for all age and income groups, supporting alternatives to the automobile, and planning for the efficient use of existing infrastructure.

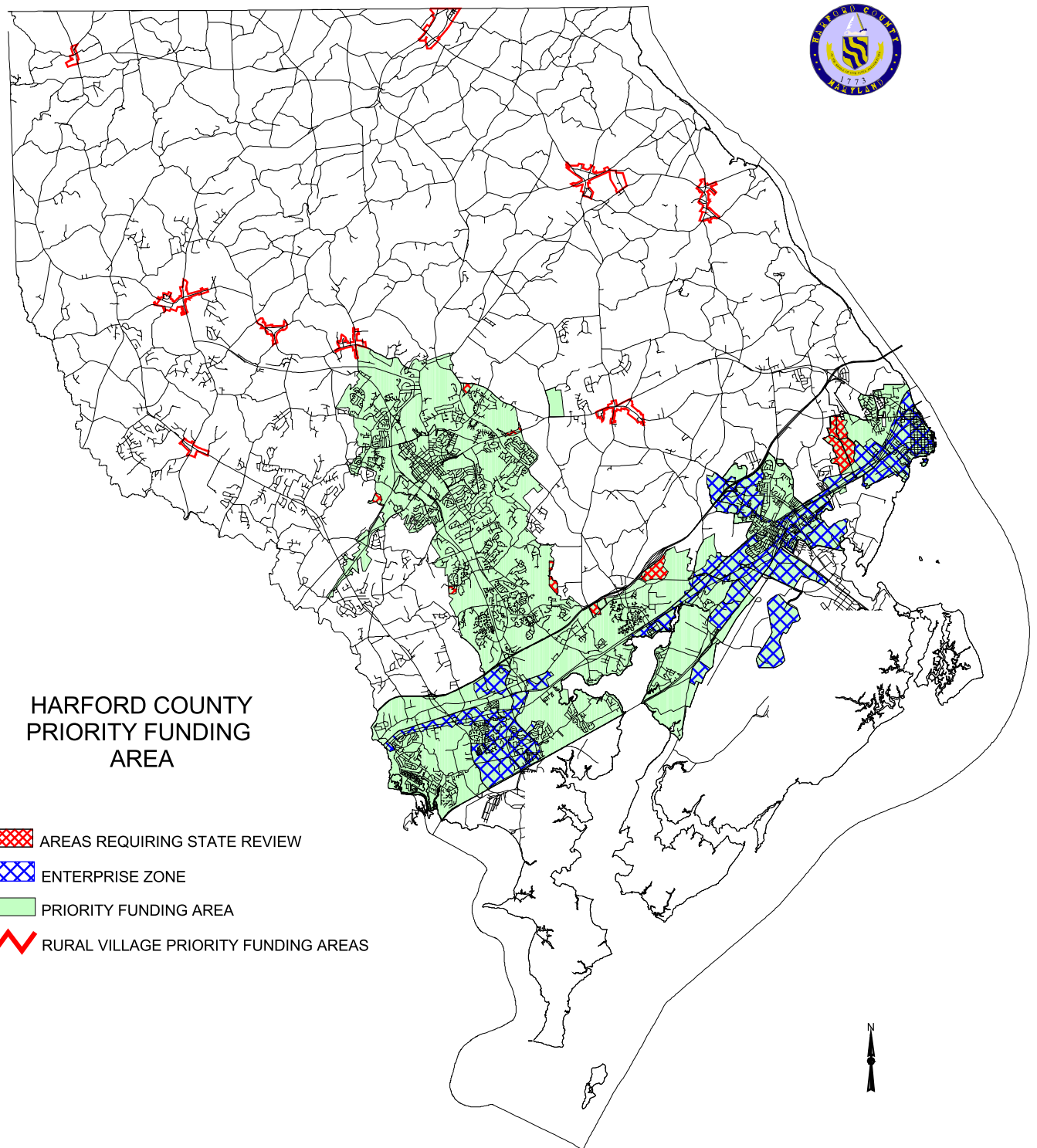
The 1997 "Smart Growth" Act also requires all counties to identify and map Priority Funding Areas that meet the requirements of the legislation. In Harford County, the Priority Funding Areas can generally be described as the Development Envelope, the municipalities, designated villages, areas designated for economic development, the HEAT Center and Harford Community College (Figure 2). These areas are locations where the State and Harford County will target their efforts to encourage and support economic development, new growth and redevelopment. State funding for projects within these areas will be considered a priority.

Rural Legacy is another part of the Smart Growth package being implemented in Harford County. This program uses State funds to purchase conservation easements for large tracts of agricultural, forest and natural areas that are subject to development pressure.

Several other programs that are part of the Smart Growth package are not being used in Harford County at this time but offer opportunities for the future. These programs include:

Live Near Your Work, which encourages employees to buy homes near their workplace in order to stabilize neighborhoods through home ownership. Targeting specific communities, this program is designed to enhance quality of life and spur economic revitalization.

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NOTE: ANY PROPOSALS FOR PROJECTS IN THE AREA LABELED AS "AREAS REQUIRING STATE REVIEW"
WILL BE REFERRED TO THE SMART GROWTH AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION
COORDINATING SUBCOMMITTEE FOR REVIEW.

Planning & Zoning JULY 2001

Figure 2

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The Job Creation Tax Credits Program is also designed to spur economic revitalization in existing communities. The program encourages mid-sized and smaller businesses to invest in Smart Growth Areas. By locating in these areas, businesses will be accessible to available labor pools. This program also encourages a more efficient use of existing infrastructure

The Brownfield Voluntary Cleanup and Revitalization Incentives Program is another effort designed to spur economic revitalization and enhance quality of life. This program establishes a cooperative agreement between businesses and the State to expedite remediation and redevelopment of unused or abandoned sites.

Harford County has moved forward with several Smart Growth initiatives. The designation of Rural Legacy Areas plus identification of the U.S. Route 40 corridor as the County's High Tech engine are both consistent with Smart Growth. Harford County has designated two Rural Legacy Areas – The Lower Deer Creek Valley and the Manor Area.

Adoption of the Edgewood and Joppa/Joppatowne Community Plans, and visioning efforts for U.S. Route 40 and U. S. Route 1 are all geared to revitalization of existing communities. All of these efforts provide specific guidance that supports redevelopment and revitalization of existing communities. In cooperation with the State, Harford County undertook a visioning program for Perryman to apply Smart Growth principles to the area. This effort proposes a diverse, vital mixed-use community that provides transportation options while also conserving much of the area's unique environmental and cultural features. The County is also working with the rural villages to help preserve their historic character while encouraging appropriate redevelopment.

Likewise, Harford County accepted the State's challenges by incorporating the "Visions" into the 1996 Master Plan, and these are carried forward into this Plan. The following outline of the "Visions" of the Planning Act explains how existing and proposed County efforts will continue to achieve these State-wide goals.

Harford County's "Visions"

Vision 1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas.

The 2004 Land Use Element Plan continues to focus future development within the Development Envelope, that is, along the MD Route 24/924 and the I-95/U.S. Route 40 corridors. The U.S. Route 40 corridor is also targeted for redevelopment and revitalization. Infill opportunities exist within underutilized sites in this corridor. Two adopted Community Plans and a series of legislative changes, including the Edgewood Neighborhood Overlay District and the Commercial Revitalization District, guide these redevelopment efforts. The County also has two enterprise zone designations in the Joppatowne – Edgewood area and Aberdeen – Havre de Grace area that supports business activities.

In response to Smart Growth initiatives, the County has designated Priority Funding Areas coinciding with the Development Envelope, the County's three municipalities, the rural villages, areas designated for commercial development as well as the HEAT Center and Harford Community

College. These areas will be given precedence over all other areas to receive State funding for roads, water and sewer, and other growth-related needs. Since 1995, an average of 82% of new residential development has occurred within the Development Envelope.

Within these Designated Growth Areas, development is concentrated around existing population centers where community facilities are provided to meet the needs of the growing population. Public utilities are planned, funded, and constructed through the County's Capital Improvement Program. The County's Adequate Public Facilities Program monitors the number and location of new housing units approved. It also provides an analysis of the current and future capacity of specific public facilities and services. This includes educational facilities, water and sewer, and roads.

Vision 2. Sensitive Areas are protected.

Harford County has long been committed to the protection and stewardship of environmentally sensitive lands and features such as non-tidal wetlands, forests, floodplains, steep slopes, and habitat areas for rare, threatened, and endangered species. The County has also adopted a Chesapeake Bay Critical Area program and new floodplain regulations, including digital maps.

Dedicated to the Bay's restoration, Harford County has continued its commitment to this effort through continued participation on the Upper Western Shore Tributary Team. In cooperation with the State of Maryland and the Upper Western Shore Tributary Team, the County has taken the lead in development of the Bush River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy. Sponsored by the Center for Watershed Protection, the County also participated in the "Builders for the Bay" program to identify changes to the residential and commercial site development process that would provide benefits to the natural environment and the community.

The Land Use Element Plan outlines the County's continued commitment to the preservation of sensitive areas. This is reiterated with specific directives listed in several other element plans. The County has consolidated its plans and specific protection strategies for these areas in the Natural Resources Element Plan which was adopted in 1998.

Vision 3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.

The Land Use Element Plan supports protection of agricultural lands by encouraging preservation of land for farming opportunities, and by directing development toward existing Rural Villages. The Plan provides several strategies to address rural growth: Purchase of Development Rights, Conservation Development Standards, Transfer of Development Rights, Agricultural Economics, and focusing growth in Rural Villages. Since their inception, County and State preservation programs have preserved over 220 properties, totaling over 35,000 acres of active productive farmland. Harford County ranks eighth, nationally, in agricultural land preservation. The Smart Growth initiative furthered this effort with its Rural Legacy program. Since 2000, Harford County has received \$4.75 million in Rural Legacy funds to preserve land in the Lower Deer Creek Valley Rural Legacy Area. This program has preserved 15 properties, totaling 1175 acres. The Manor Area, which includes portions of Baltimore and Harford Counties, is also a designated Rural Legacy Area.

and has received \$2.5 million for preservation efforts. Through the Manor Area Program, 94 acres have been preserved in Harford County.

Legislatively, the County has enacted changes to the Zoning Code that address Conservation Development Standards and Transfer of Development Rights. A comprehensive review of the Zoning Code will be undertaken to ensure that these techniques support this Vision. This Plan also recommends that the boundaries of the Rural Villages remain in tact.

The County has also developed an economic policy to help keep farming a viable industry in the County. A series of economic strategies have been developed, including broadening the uses allowed on agriculturally zoned lands which supports expansion of agriculturally related economic activities.

Vision 4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.

All of Harford County's planning efforts are, at least in part, directed toward meeting this vision. The Land Use Element Plan outlines a growth area to limit sprawl and concentrate capital projects and infrastructure. It also contains specific measures to help preserve agricultural lands and protect land and water resources in the County. The County's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program also addresses development within the Critical Area. Harford County has long recognized the importance of protecting sensitive areas such as non-tidal wetlands, forests, floodplains, and habitat areas for rare, threatened, and endangered species of flora and fauna. The 2004 Land Use Element Plan is designed to continue these efforts by addressing specific community-level concerns, as well as opportunities for heightened local stewardship by County residents.

The Plan places a strong emphasis on the County as a partner in the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy. The County has signed the Chesapeake Bay Partnership Agreement for Local Governments, agreeing to work cooperatively with the State to participate on Tributary Teams. As a member of the Upper Western Shore Tributary Team, the County continues to support efforts to meet the goals established by the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Toward this, the County, in cooperation with the State of Maryland and the Upper Western Shore Tributary Team, has taken the lead in development of the Bush River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy. In addition, the County's wastewater treatment plants at Sod Run and Joppatowne have been upgraded for Biological Nitrogen Removal (BNR) to improve nutrient reduction.

In 1997, the County was awarded a Silver Status by the Chesapeake Bay Partner Community Award Program. This award identifies four areas of environmental concern – improving water quality, promoting sound land use, protecting and restoring living resources and habitat, and engaging the community. The program then rated the jurisdiction based on the amount of goals achieved. In 2003, the County received an upgrade to a Gold Status, further emphasizing its commitment toward promoting and restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

Moreover, in the 1990's the County purchased almost 800 acres of bay-front property with approximately 13,770 feet of shoreline for preservation and appropriate passive use. Harford County is also the location of the Otter Point Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, one of three Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve sites in Maryland. Included in the 690 acre

Research Reserve are two land areas connected by water: Leight Park (93 acres), Bosley Conservancy (336 acres) and State-owned water (261 acres). A visitors' center at Leight Park, on Otter Point Creek, provides a teaching and learning center for this important resource, critical to the health of the Bay.

Vision 5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.

Resources are protected and conserved through the implementation of goals, objectives, and policies outlined in the element plans. Focusing growth into Designated Growth Areas will ensure that land will be developed in an efficient manner. Regulations governing the removal of forest lands, protection of stream corridors, agricultural land preservation, and mineral resource extraction represent but a few of the County's efforts to conserve natural resources and use them in an efficient manner to support planned development. The County is also committed to preserving its historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources to help maintain and enhance the livability of the County's communities, villages, and landscapes. These efforts are helped not only by the adoption of specific element plans but also by the County's emphasis on redevelopment and revitalization, which conserves resources by encouraging the reuse of existing or underutilized sites. This not only helps to improve the quality of life within existing communities, it also lessens impacts to agricultural lands and other resources. To support this approach, Zoning Code changes have been enacted. These include the Edgewood Neighborhood Overlay District, which provides incentives and design standards to encourage redevelopment of underutilized sites consistent with the Edgewood Community Plan, and the U.S. 40 Commercial Revitalization District, which provides flexibility and incentives to attract quality redevelopment on underutilized sites.

Vision 6. To assure the achievement of Visions 1 through 5, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.

Harford County Government has initiated an aggressive approach to encouraging economic growth. This approach links growth management actions through the perspective of economic development, regulation, and streamlined activities. Aberdeen Proving Ground is a critical anchor to the County's economy and is considered a key element in supporting this Vision. Land areas designated for Industrial/ Employment in the Land Use Element Plan have been designated to supply high tech employment opportunities. Zoning districts such as the U.S. Route 40 Commercial Revitalization District, the Edgewood Neighborhood Overlay District, and the Light Industrial District are established to encourage revitalization of older communities and to better utilize limited land resources. The Mixed Office designation focuses on two prime interstate interchange locations where high quality employment will be encouraged. Working together, the Office of Economic Development and the Department of Planning and Zoning have been given primary responsibility for implementing these economic growth approaches.

The Office of Economic Development also supports economic growth through a strong, coordinated private/public sector partnership which involves workforce recruitment and training opportunities such as the Higher Education and Applied Technology Center (HEAT), implementation of the "Fast Track" permitting process and Enterprise Zones, focus on agricultural development programs, coordinated permit tracking, and an accurate inventory of industrial-zoned properties. Battelle has

invested \$20 million for the development of a state-of-the-art research and development facility at the HEAT Center. The Office of Economic Development has developed a Technology Development Strategic Plan to channel the County's growth of technology enterprises.

Vision 7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

Harford County's fiscal policies ensure funding for public services, programs, and facilities by anticipating future expenditure requirements and revenue sources. Funding mechanisms are addressed in two forms, namely, the operating and capital budgets through Local, State, Federal and private/public partnership resources. In order to provide an adequate physical infrastructure, and improve and maintain services while channeling growth, capital budget expenditures are reviewed in relation to the County's Land Use Element Plan and other element plans. Specific element plans and their implementation measures also provide funding direction to achieve these "Visions." Examples include the funding of capital projects identified to meet the Adequate Public Facility ordinance, and the Purchase of Development Rights program. Additional funding tools, such as a development excise tax, impact fees, or transfer taxes, will be researched by County agencies including the Office of Economic Development, Department of Public Works, Department of Law, and Treasury Department.

Vision 8. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.

The Department of Planning and Zoning supports balancing land development and the availability of public facilities through the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) standards for schools, water and sewer facilities, and roads. Harford County's APF regulations were first adopted in 1991 and subsequently additions were made in following years to include water, sewer and roads. The County has established an APF Task Force to regularly review the APF standards.

Each year, the Department of Planning and Zoning prepares an Annual Growth Report describing growth and facility capacity. This document highlights potential deficiencies as well as identified capital projects associated with the specific facilities included in the Adequate Public Facilities regulations. Additionally, the Planning Advisory Board, in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Zoning, reviews the Capital Improvement Program on an annual basis to determine its consistency with the goals, policies and objectives outlined in the County's Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Similar to the "Visions" of the 1992 Maryland Planning Act, Harford County has established the following guiding principles for the development of the Land Use Element Plan and other element plans. These principles form the framework for the entire Master Plan.

Quality-of-Life

Enhancement of our living environment is a priority for Harford County Government. Harford County is dedicated to achieving a high quality-of-life by providing a mix of superior educational facilities, an acceptable functioning transportation network, adequate public facilities, safe and sustainable communities, the means for preserving our resources, and an array of recreational and entertainment opportunities. When we recognize and enhance the strengths of the unique communities within the County, our overall quality-of-life will be measurably improved.

Stewardship of our Resources

Harford County recognizes the value of our agricultural, natural, historical, and cultural resources. By working with Federal and State agencies, as well as with local communities, these irreplaceable sites and features are protected. Preservation of prime agricultural lands, natural systems, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, historic sites and architecture, cultural heritage, and local landmarks are important in nurturing a sense of our uniqueness and solidifying our identity.

Growth Management

Harford County recognizes the importance of enhancing the vitality of our communities, both inside and outside of the Development Envelope. Our growth management strategy preserves the character of Harford County by providing sufficient locations, within designated growth areas, for residential and commercial developments. Directing the majority of growth to these areas protects the integrity and economic vitality of these areas, and preserves the character of our rural areas. Harford County further recognizes the relationship between our built and natural environments, and seeks to balance these entities throughout the County. The County's growth management program shall be designed to implement Smart Growth policies and the "Visions" of the Planning Act of 1992 within the unique context of Harford County.

Redevelopment and Revitalization

To further enhance the vitality of communities while preserving undeveloped lands, Harford County supports the creative reuse of vacant and underutilized sites and structures. Redevelopment and revitalization of these sites helps to minimize development of land outside of the Development Envelope and in other areas not designated for growth. Quality design standards are encouraged, and will strengthen and preserve the "sense of place" within our communities.

A Sound, Balanced, and Diversified Local Economy

Harford County is a growing community with a wide range of retail, business, service, and employment needs. Continual support and coordination with Aberdeen Proving Ground is a key component to the local economy. The County actively supports established industrial, commercial, and agricultural enterprises, while seeking to attract other businesses to broaden its economic base. Harford County supports high-tech businesses as a means for providing additional, high-quality employment opportunities. Harford County is committed to providing a variety of employment opportunities for its citizens, which will lessen our residents' dependence on a small group of widely-scattered employment centers, and diversify the local economy.

Commitment to Communities

Harford County Government is dedicated to providing a forum for a broad spectrum of local viewpoints. Through public meetings and hearings, County government gains a better understanding of citizen's views on matters such as land use, zoning, budget decisions, and current development. The County is committed to continuing this interaction, as it strengthens the identity of its communities. The County provides further opportunities for citizen involvement through Community Councils, the Planning Advisory Board, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Environmental Advisory Board, the Economic Development Advisory Board, and other similar groups. Harford County maintains partnerships with the State and a host of local non-profit organizations. The County enlists the aid of these groups in projects protecting important local resources such as Falling Branch, the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, and the Liriodendron, as well as providing County assistance to private agricultural preservation efforts.

Coordination Among Agencies

Coordination among government agencies, whether they be State, Federal, municipal, or other County agencies, is of utmost importance in achieving an organized and efficient approach to meeting community needs. Outreach efforts will continue to coordinate program initiatives with adjoining counties, the County's three municipalities (Aberdeen, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace), Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Mason-Dixon Task Force and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Harford County actively pursues a policy of cooperation among agencies, which ultimately results in streamlining government processes, reducing conflicts, and achieving regulatory consistency.

INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

The State's 1992 Planning Act directs local governments to coordinate their planning and development efforts to achieve the goals listed as the "Visions". Interjurisdictional Coordination is the term used to identify the system of coordinated planning required of all Maryland counties and municipalities. The Act requires that local planning efforts remain consistent with the State's Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and overall Planning Policy. Under the Planning Act, local comprehensive plans must include recommendations for improving planning and development processes, to encourage economic progress and to direct future growth to appropriate areas.

It is generally agreed that interjurisdictional coordination and regionalism is important and valuable. However, when real world issues are confronted by jurisdictions with conflicting objectives, agreement can be difficult to achieve. Issues, when not addressed early in the process, may grow into disputes that become an impediment to effective coordination. To prevent this, Harford County has been at the forefront in supporting coordinated efforts at the local, municipal, Federal, and regional level.

Over the years, Harford County has participated in the Baltimore metropolitan planning organization, known as the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB). As a member of this organization, Harford County has attempted to coordinate local planning concerns with region-wide transportation and environmental issues. These activities have ranged from assistance in the development of regional long range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs, to promotion and participation in regional air-and-water quality efforts.

In addition to these efforts, Harford County continues to work with the three incorporated municipalities to coordinate planning efforts. Quarterly meetings are held, where the jurisdictions' planning directors discuss issues and development applications of mutual concern. Harford County initiated an Intergovernmental Task Force on Smart Growth in 2000. The efforts of the task force resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlined the objectives and tasks that each jurisdiction will observe to coordinate municipal development and policy plans with Harford County's efforts. The County will continue to work with the municipalities to maintain this MOU as part of interjurisdictional coordination efforts.

Provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding continue to be:

- Support rational development patterns which lead to an improved environment, a better business climate, and higher quality of life.
- Optimize the use of available land resources and public infrastructure.
- Coordinate compatible interjurisdictional goals, objectives and policies to guide development and resource protection.
- Implement a cost effective and efficient provision of services and facilities.

- Establish formal and informal forums to ensure continuing communication for information sharing.
- Strengthen the traditional town centers and municipalities to assure their long-term viability.
- Avoid conflict in matters regarding annexation and development actions.
- Share resources to affect common objectives.

The County and the three municipalities face their own challenges in meeting these goals. As the jurisdictions plan for the future, each will continue to address growth management and the need to develop land in a manner consistent with all respective Comprehensive Master Plans.

The Town of Bel Air and the County recognize that there are continuing pressures on the transportation network, water and sewer infrastructure, schools, and park and recreation facilities. Since most of the area encumbering the Town is essentially built out, County growth has put increased pressure on many public facilities and strained, to some degree, the Town's economic vitality.

One of the major coordination efforts that must be addressed is with the cities of Aberdeen and Havre de Grace, related to the future of the area between these two cities south of I-95. Over the past few years, many properties have been annexed into each of these cities. Identification of long term solutions for both infrastructure and public services in these areas must be addressed. In addition, ongoing coordination efforts fostering economic development opportunities at the HEAT Center, in the Perryman area, and at the Ripken Stadium complex, should be maintained.

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